



Brownfields Showcase Community New Bedford, MA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. In May 1997, Vice President Gore announced a Brownfields National Partnership to bring together the resources of more than 15 federal agencies to address local cleanup and reuse issues in a more coordinated manner. In 1998, this multi-agency partnership designated 16 "Brownfields Showcase Communities"—models demonstrating the benefits of collaborative activity on brownfields. In October 2000, the partnership selected 12 additional "Brownfields Showcase Communities" to continue the success of the initiative. The Brownfields Showcase Communities are distributed across the country and vary by size, resources, and community type. A wide range of support will be leveraged, depending on the particular needs of each Showcase Community.

BACKGROUND

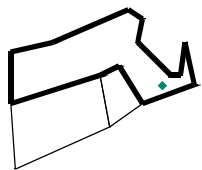
The Brownfields National Partnership has selected New Bedford, Massachusetts, as a Brownfields Showcase Community. The fourth largest city in Massachusetts (population 99,982), New Bedford is located on the Atlantic Ocean and has a rich history of whaling, cotton and textile manufacturing, and fishing. Over the years, these industries made the city an attractive destination for immigrants such as the Portuguese, who today make up more than half of the population.

Like many New England cities, New Bedford's legacy of fishing and manufacturing has suffered over the past few decades. New Bedford has lost more than 11,000 manufacturing jobs, and more than 16 percent of the

fisherman have lost their jobs. The city has high unemployment (12 percent) and poverty (20 percent) rates. In 1995, the city was identified by a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) report as being "doubly burdened" by population loss and high poverty rates, and the state has designated New Bedford as an "economically distressed area." Realizing that tourism, coupled with these struggling industries, could help revitalize the city's economy and improve the quality of life for its residents, the city established a brownfields program

in 1998 and has undertaken environmental assessments at 15 properties. A whaling museum and historic park recently opened, and three separate master plans for the city are underway or in development.

Community Profile



New Bedford, Massachusetts

Since the 1970s, the City of New Bedford's traditional economic bases of fishing and clothing manufacturing have been hard hit by international competition. The city has identified more than 30 brownfields sites, and Showcase Community designation will bring additional resources and expertise toward assessing these sites and carrying out the master plans.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In the past three years, the city has come together to reverse this trend of job loss and poverty and is using brownfields redevelopment as its rallying point. In 1998, the city and the New Bedford Economic Development Council (NBEDC) established a task force to provide guidance to its new Brownfields Program and began by inventorying the city's sites. In all, 31 sites were identified, all in varying stages of contamination and cleanup. The city and NBEDC work together to determine how to initiate and foster economic and job development in New Bedford. Their goal is to encourage the private sector to take the lead in economic development with the support of city government. Efforts related to that goal include:

- Obtaining an \$800,000 grant to demolish and clean up one of the city's brownfields sites, the Talleyrand site, and enticing Aerovox Industries to construct a \$9 million facility on the site, creating 400 new jobs;
- Coordinating an effort to identify other brownfields sites within the city (to date 14 have been assessed or have assessments underway);
- Redeveloping the former Standard Times field into a 10-lot subdivision, which includes a business incubator for technology startups;
- Helping to secure and redevelop the former Star Store site for the University of Massachusetts; and
- Creating 3,700 new jobs.

New Bedford has formed partnerships with federal, state, and local entities to address brownfields.

Partnerships include:

- EPA, which awarded New Bedford a Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot, a Revolving Loan Fund Pilot, a Job Training Pilot, a Brownfields Alternative Dispute Resolution Pilot, and two Targeted Brownfields Assessments;
- U.S. Department of Commerce–Economic Development Administration (EDA) and HUD, which are providing a \$1 million grant and \$250,000, respectively, to redevelop the former Standard Times Building into a business incubator for high tech businesses;
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)/Federal Highway Administration, which has committed \$12 million to restore or provide new access to land adjacent to the waterfront (DOT has also made grants of more than \$3 million to build a new freight ferry terminal on the harbor);
- U.S. Department of Interior (DOI)–National Park Service, which has provided a home for the New Bedford National Historic Whaling Museum in the center of the New Bedford National Historic Park and has spurred an \$11 million capital campaign with the city; and
- Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, which has provided three grants to local brownfields sites: an \$800,000 Community Development Action Grant for demolition and cleanup at the Talleyrand site; a \$700,000 grant for demolition which facilitated cleanup at the Morse Cutting Tools site; and a \$425,000 grant for demolition at two additional brownfields.

SHOWCASE COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

New Bedford plans to use the Showcase Community designation to continue to combine three critical elements necessary for a successful brownfields program—community need, a record of accomplishment, and a spirit of partnership. The city has recently established three new master plans aimed at economic development, job creation, open space protection, recreation enhancement, and increased environmental protection. The Showcase Community designation will bring much needed resources to bear toward the fulfillment of these plans. The city will serve as a model to other cities who are “doubly burdened” by population loss and high poverty and to cities with traditional water resource-based economies.

Contacts

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For more information on the Brownfields Showcase
Communities, visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm>.